

Office skills program for deaf is a first in Canada

After decades of struggling with strange words and sentence structure, Ann Wall is finally learning in her own language.

Wall is deaf, and like most deaf people, regards American Sign Language (ASL) as her first language.

ASL is a language with its own unique structure and ways of expressing ideas that don't correspond to English or any other spoken language.

While Wall has learned English, starting at grade school in Toronto in the 1950s, it has always been a second language for her.

Now, as a student in a new program at George Brown that teaches computer and business skills to deaf people, she's finally in an environment where ASL is the only language of instruction and conversation between teachers, support staff and students.

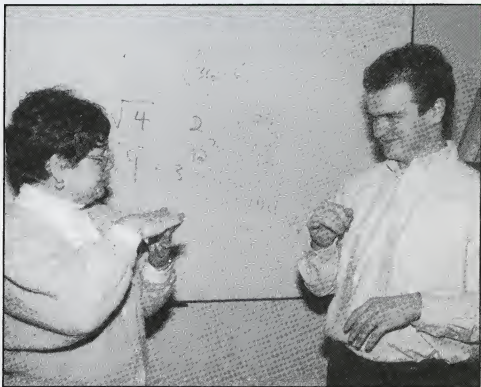
"Using ASL, everything is a lot clearer," she says through an interpreter. "I really fit in here. We all have the same culture."

The program, called Silent Skills, will improve Wall's English and teach her the computer skills to allow her to seek work in word processing.

Silent Skills is a 36-week program to give deaf people the skills they need to work in computerized offices. Unique in Canada, the program was developed to meet the needs of deaf people for job-related training that leads to careers in growing sectors of Canada's economy.

Deaf people have significantly higher rates of unemployment than the population at large, and many have been laid off in the current recession, according to Canadian Hearing Society Employment Counsellor Dinah Arviko.

While employers are generally more receptive to hiring deaf people now than in the past — in part because of employment equity programs that encourage hiring people who are underrepresented in the workforce — they face discrimination by some employers who are reluctant to make changes in their workplace, such as adding phones that deaf people use, or



Silent Skills student Ann Wall discusses a math problem with counsellor/trainer Paul LeDrew. Silent Skills, which started recently at George Brown, is the first program in Canada taught in sign language by deaf people. The 36-week program prepares students to work in computerized offices.

occasionally using interpreters, Arviko says.

In the past, many deaf people were encouraged to seek jobs in skilled and semi-skilled trade areas such as printing, manufacturing and painting,

Inside: Student chefs tackle Kraft Dinner

It may never be served in a restaurant — and it will probably never be included in cooking courses at the School of Hospitality. But many students, including future chefs, eat Kraft Dinner. Recently, they were asked to see what could be done with the ubiquitous macaroni and cheese dish. See page five for the result.

Wall says.

"It was hands-on work," she says.

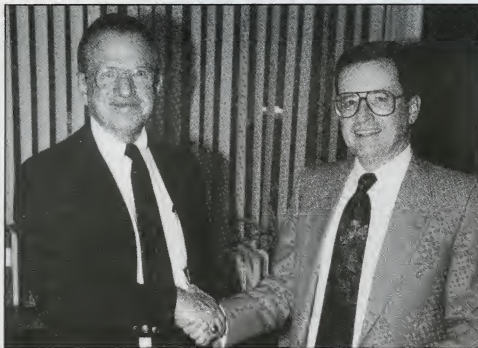
Now deaf people, encouraged by role models such as Silent Skills program manager Henry Whalen, are choosing careers in a much wider variety of fields, including law and engineering.

Wall herself worked in data processing until being laid off from her job with a Scarborough renovation firm in 1990.

Many of the 15 students in Silent Skills, who vary in age from 21 to 49, worked in factories before joining the program, Whalen says.

At Silent Skills, students get a mix of academic upgrading, job preparation, life skills training, and office computer training.

After 12 weeks of classes, including computer training on such popular software as WordPerfect, Lotus 1-2-3
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NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEAF GRADUATES - Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Associate Vice-President Dr. Jack Clarck (left) and George Brown President John Rankin shake hands after signing an articulation agreement. The agreement gives advanced standing in RIT diploma and degree programs for deaf graduates of some of George Brown's technology and graphic arts programs. RIT, which has 1,100 deaf and hearing-impaired students out of a total student population of more than 14,000 at its campus in northern New York state, has already enrolled four George Brown grads.

Program trains deaf people to work on computers

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and dBase, they start the first of two, six-week work placements with companies such as the Bank of Montreal, American Express and IBM. Students choose to specialize in word processing or financial/bookkeeping work.

The concept for the program was developed by the Bank of Montreal and is offered by the college in co-operation with Canada Employment and Immigration, and the George Brown College Foundation, a private charitable organization headed by former college president Doug Light.

The bank developed the concept for the program, conducted preliminary negotiations with federal government officials, and is giving the program \$300,000 over three years. \$100,000 of that money has already been spent to buy computer equipment.

Harriet Stairs, the bank's vice-president of human resources, chairs the program's advisory committee, which is made up of representatives from the Foundation, Canada Employment, the deaf community, the business community, and students enrolled in the program.

It is the first computer and skills training program in Canada that is conducted entirely in ASL.

The program, which will be officially opened early in 1992 is located on the third floor of 1 Darnell at Casa Loma Campus.

Sean Donovan wins seat on Board of Governors

School of Technology Chairperson Sean Donovan has won a seat on the Board of Governors with solid support from his fellow administrators.

Donovan polled 33 votes in the election on Dec. 5 — more than half of the total of 60 votes cast — defeating Hospitality Chairperson Brian Cooper, who got 19 votes, and St. James Campus Manager and incumbent David Copey, who got seven votes.

A total of 105 administrators were eligible to vote.

Starting in January, 1992, Donovan will represent administrative staff on the Board, the college's highest decision-making body, for two-and-a-half years. Other staff groups and students also elect Board representatives.

Vile named Dean of Community Services Division

In many ways, he's had the job for 21 years — and now he has the title to go with it.

Since 1970, Jeff Vile has been responsible for community services programs at George Brown. Since November, he's been Dean of the newly re-established Community Services Division.

For the last 11 years, Vile was a chairperson in a combined Community Services and Health Sciences Division.

He credits his staff for the recreation of a separate division and the appointment of a dean.

"It's without a doubt a reflection of their hard work and creativity," he says.

That division, which had 400 students in 1975, has grown to include 1,300 full-time students and 2,000 part-time students.

Vile says his staff of 150 is responsible for the quality and breadth of community services programming at the college today. Participation and collective decision-making by staff is encouraged, and open discussion about all issues is fostered with regular staff meetings, he says.

"We have that kind of spirit."

Community Services staff played a key role in Vile's appointment as dean. They sent a delegation to senior administration to ensure their involvement in the selection process, and ultimately voted unanimously to recommend their chairperson for the job.

Vile, who has worked in the fishing industry, has been a nurse and librarian, and did military service in the British army in Egypt, joined the Provincial Institute of Trades — George Brown's forerunner — to teach the new Child and Youth Worker program in 1967.

He became chair of the Applied Arts Division in 1970, and chair of the Community Services Division in 1975.

The search is underway to find a new dean for the Health Sciences Division. The position has been advertised nationally, and applicants are currently being screened. The position has been vacant since the summer of 1991.

Gem of a graduate earns top marks in Canada and Britain

Jill Keating may be the jewel in the crown of George Brown's 1991 graduating class.

The Gemmology program graduate earned the highest marks in the 1991 nation-wide exam of the Canadian Gemmological Association (CGA).

She's the first George Brown graduate to take the top spot — and win the coveted Dean S. M. Field Medal — in what the CGA calls its preliminary examination.

The 26-year-old Toronto woman scored better than 62 people from across Canada who wrote the theory exam, which is a prerequisite for writing the practical exam to become a certified CGA gemmologist.

After her success with the CGA, Keating went on to write the examination of the British Gemmological Association, coming third out of 600 people world-wide. While not essential, becoming a Fellow of the British association improves job prospects.

Keating, now a certified gemmologist in Canada and Great Britain, works as a quality control inspector of finished jewellery at Fabrikant Commonwealth Trading Inc. on Queen Street, the Canadian head office of an international diamond merchant.

Keating says the college's Gemmol-
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Gemmology graduate Jill Keating, seen here at work, earned top marks in Canadian and British certification exams.



Photo: Neil McCollery

Court Reporting student Penny Hutchinson (left) learns about wheelchair travel from Human Services Counsellor student Suzanne Marion, who uses one all the time, at a Special Needs Awareness Day at St. James in November.

Students get to experience disabilities

Penny Hutchinson had a simple goal: to buy a cup of coffee.

It seemed easy enough as the Court Reporting student sat in a wheelchair in the lobby area of the basement of St. James. The cafeteria and coffee were just a few yards away.

Several frustrating minutes later, Hutchinson had her coffee, but had lost her composure.

"I was worn out by the time I got it," she said.

Her apparent disability did nothing to stop her fellow students from blocking her path. "They were standing in my way."

Hutchinson was trying a wheelchair

for the first time as part of Special Needs Awareness Day at St. James in November.

For many staff and students it was an eye-opening experience of the challenges and frustrations that many students live with every day.

"People said, 'Now I really understand what it's like (to have a disability),'"

said Barbara Revell of the college's Special Needs Office. But wheelchairs and blindfolds (to simulate blindness) only tell one side of the story. For every student in a wheelchair, there are many more with disabilities — like learning disabilities — that are not readily seen, she says.

Warning: 'photographer' has assaulted women

A man posing as a photographer, who has lured women to empty classrooms and assaulted them, has been seen at George Brown.

The man, claiming to be a "campus photographer" or photography student from Ryerson, recently approached women at Casa Loma and St. James.

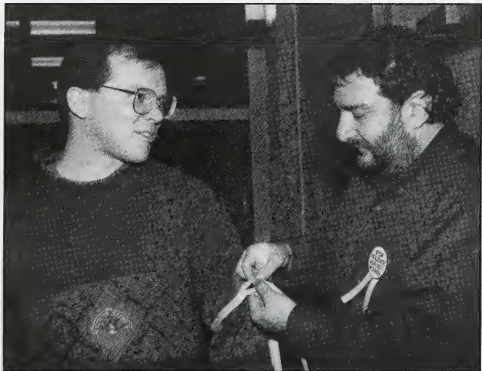
His description matches that of a man who, using a similar story, has assaulted several women at the University of Toronto's downtown campus.

The man, who has been seen riding a bicycle, is Caucasian, about five feet, eight inches tall, with brown curly hair. He appears to be in his late 20s and weighs about 160 pounds.

If staff or students are approached by a man matching this description, they are asked to contact security or campus management staff immediately. If college staff are unavailable, or if quick action is essential, staff and students are encouraged to call police by dialing 911 on any phone, including pay phones.



SAYING NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN- The college community focused on the issue of violence against women in early December as it marked the second anniversary of the killing of 14 women in Montreal. Marie-Claire Charles (above right), a second-year student in the Counsellor/Advocate for Assaulted Women and Children program, is presented with the Ecole Polytechnique Memorial Bursary Award by program co-ordinator Sandra Fishleigh at a ceremony at Nightingale Campus on Dec. 6. General Arts and Science student Mark Schlachter (below left) has a white ribbon pinned on him by Community Services teacher Ron Sluser, the national co-ordinator of the White Ribbon Campaign. The campaign was an unqualified success with thousands of men, including prominent politicians, wearing white arm bands to show they oppose violence. Schlachter said he was wearing a ribbon because "I totally disagree with any violence against women or with the sexist ideas that have been going on, and this is my way of saying that it's not right."



Gemmology grad wins top honours

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ogy program thoroughly equipped her for the gruelling CGA and British exams. "George Brown has an outstanding course," she says. "It was very intensive and arduous. We put in a lot of hours and were constantly challenged."

The exams included questions on chemistry, physics, optics, stone separation, stone colouring and identification. Keating also did well in the CGA practical exam, which included hands-on testing and certified her as a gemmologist.

Keating, who graduated in May, 1991 after taking two years of the Jewellery Arts program, came to the field after earning an arts degree in university. She earned her B.A. in Humanistic Studies (an Arts and Science discipline) at McGill University in 1988. After looking unsuccessfully for work in Montreal, Keating returned to Toronto and enrolled at George Brown.

"I have mixed opinions about the importance of a B.A.," she says. "It was a way to improve my education and an asset to have it, but it wasn't directly helpful to me in getting a job."

Keating decided to pursue a career in the jewellery industry, which had been an abiding interest.

"I've had a lifelong fascination with jewellery," she says. "I didn't used to think it was a viable career option, but now I know that it's a multi-faceted industry with a lot of small sidelines that offer a great deal of opportunity."

Keating's current goal is to become a jewellery appraiser, which gemmologists can do after they gain experience and on-the-job training. Appraisers determine the inherent value of jewellery and can determine its fair market value.

Gemmology is essentially the study of gemstones. Gemmologists are able to identify and classify natural and synthetic stones, distinguish their characteristics, and work with special instruments such as spectroscopes, refractometers and polariscopes.

Graduates of George Brown's 34-week Gemmology program go on to work in the jewellery industry in wholesale businesses that produce, import and distribute jewellery, as well as in retail stores.

Photos: Page 4 and 5: Mary Ann Thengren

Kraft Dinner challenge: create a dish that's good and cheap

Check a student's shopping cart and chances are you'll find a box of Kraft Dinner — or one of its many imitators or variations. The ubiquitous box of dry macaroni with its foil package of cheese powder is a staple of many students' diets. It's cheap and it's fast — you can boil up a bowlful in about 10 minutes.

That's why it was chosen by hospitality students for a special marketing project last month.

"We were deciding what to do and we thought, 'What do students eat?'," said Culinary Management student Rob Kausen. "It's Kraft Dinner. It's one of the mainstays, so we decided to use it for our contest."

The appeal of Kraft Dinner goes back to 1937, when a St. Louis salesperson attached packets of cheese to macaroni boxes as a way to sell more Kraft cheese.

The combination of macaroni and cheese was an instant hit, and its popularity endures. In 1989, a whopping 58-million boxes of Kraft Dinner were sold in Canada.

Kraft Dinner is a "comfort food," says Alene Miller, product assistant at Kraft General Foods Canada Inc. It's still inexpensive today, retailing from 49 to 99 cents a package, depending on the store.

"Kraft Dinner is a food that follows us through our lives," says Miller. "We started having it as children, we cook it when we go away to college, and then we serve it to our kids."

Ten hospitality students took up the challenge of making 'KD' both good and cheap. The rules allowed them to use any ingredients they wanted — with one box of Kraft Dinner. The contest was judged by staff members in the hospitality school.

Students added tabasco sauce or bacon, others garnished with green peppers or mixed in an egg or seasoning.

Contest winner Ian Beck explained the appeal of Kraft Dinner for students. "It's affordable and nutritious," said Beck. "It's also quick, easy and cheap. It has a kind of cult following, and everybody has their own special way of making Kraft Dinner."

Student Teri Cordilone decided to supplement the bright orange cheese powder by sprinkling parmesan cheese into her recipe. "At 49 cents, it's a great staple," she says.



Culinary Management student Ian Beck (above) spiced up Kraft Dinner with salsa and nachos to win a recent student recipe competition based on the macaroni and cheese dish.

Ian Beck's Speedy Gonzales Kraft Dinner

INGREDIENTS:

- One box Kraft Dinner
- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. flour
- 3/4 cup milk
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. thick salsa sauce
- 30 nacho chips
- 1/2 Bermuda onion, chopped
- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 1 tomato, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 head lettuce, chopped thinly

INSTRUCTIONS:

Melt butter in saucepan on medium heat. Add flour and combine into a sandy, grainy mixture. Remove saucepan from heat and allow to cool. Add milk slowly to saucepan and combine into a smooth mixture. Return saucepan to medium heat. Add package of Kraft Dinner cheese sauce and salsa sauce to this mixture, continuing to stir over medium heat. Boil Kraft Dinner macaroni noodles according to package directions. Combine noodles with sauce mixture. Arrange chopped lettuce on a platter and place sauce-noodle combination on top. Garnish with onion, tomato, and green pepper. Arrange nacho chips along outside of platter. Serves four.